

Socialist Worker

Housing: A basic right

Antoinette has two children, a girl and a boy aged eleven and eight. She is living in a tiny one bedroom flat in Rathmines. She and her children have been living in these conditions for eleven years.

Dublin Corporation have refused to offer her adequate accommodation. Officials have told her that there are no "exceptional compassionate grounds" for giving her a house. Antoinette now faces the prospect of spending many more years in these cramped conditions.

This is no way for children to be brought up in a country that claims to have one of the most successful economies in the world.

Up to now, Antoinette has been fighting Dublin Corporation on her own. She has been met with resistance at every turn.

But now a struggle is developing in Rathmines to get local authority housing for Antoinette and the hundreds of others who need it.

CUTBACKS IN LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING

In Dublin the waiting lists are at their highest for twenty years and growing dramatically, 50 new families or individuals every week are applying.

Currently, 27,000 people are on the waiting lists across the country, but with only a few hundred new houses being built, this means that people desperately wanting accommodation are getting nowhere nearer the head of the queue.

As those who cannot afford a house enter the private rented sector, rents rise and the least well off people are caught in a trap. No wonder the sight of people sleeping rough is becoming more common. Senior local authority officials have predicted disaster with the combined list of the four Dublin authorities soaring to 12,000.

If the logic of the market is allowed to continue to run its course thousands of people will suffer the misery of being unable to afford a place to live.

Three simple demands would quickly alleviate the problem. But to implement them means standing up to the landlords and builders and insisting housing needs come before profit.

1. Public Ownership of building land.

Some landowners have made a fortune by bribing local councillors to have their land re-zoned.

It is time to end this corruption by nationalising the land needed for a major house building programme.

2. Rent control on all flats and bedsits.

Control on rented accommodation was removed after a Fianna Fail senator took action on behalf of a landlords organisation.

Today Irish landlords are the least regulated in Europe. We need measures to stop them raising rents and to make them provide suitable accommodation.

3. Tax the rich to fund an emergency house building programme.

Local authorities are building fewer houses because they are starved of cash. Those who made a fortune out of the Celtic Tiger should be taxed heavily to fund a local authority house building programme.

FIGHT FOR ANTOINETTE
Picket Dublin Corporation Housing
Department, Fishamble Street,
Wood Quay
Thursday 8th October - 10am

Join us! If you would like to join the SWP return this slip to: SWP, PO BOX 1648, Dublin 8.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____